up to 100%, on the automatic route in the Education Sector, subject to the sectoral rules/ regulations as may be applicable. The Government is not aware of any problem in this regard. Focused attention is being given for promoting quality and excellence in higher education through steps including provision of improved infrastructure, qualitative improvement in faculty, increase in number of doctoral fellowships, emphasis on research, schemes of Universities with potential for excellence and colleges with potential for excellence, periodical revision of curriculum, academic reforms, etc. Several fold increase in Public investment on all sectors of education has been envisaged in the XI Five Year Plan for enhancing capacity and improvement of qualtiy of education. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has regulations in place for entry and operation of foreign universities/institutions imparting technical education in India.

Increasing access to higher educations

3575. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made by Government to ascertain the percentage of youth who have access to higher education;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether, to increase access to higher education amongst youths, Government has taken any steps or formulated any strategy to achieve the target; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) According to the provisional statistics available for 2005-06 the Gross Enrolment Ratio in the relevant age group (18-24 years) for Higher Education is 11.61.

(c) and (d) Budgetary allocations for higher and technical education has been substantially increased since 2004-05 to expand existing capacity as well as to establish new higher educational institutions. The Central Government has established a number of Central Universities, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Information Technology, National Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research. In the XI Plan the National Development Council has approved:

(i) establisnment of 16 central universities in uncovered states and 14 world class universities;

(ii) 370 new degree colleges in districts having Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education lower than the national average by incentivising State Governments to establish such colleges;

(iii) construction of girls hostels;

(iv) one time assistance to enable 150 State Universities and 6000 colleges uncovered by the UGC to attain level of eligibility for UGC assistance; and

(v) reducing regional imbalance, social gaps and promotion of inclusiveness in higher education.

OBC reservation in IIMs

3576. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that 575 OBC students have been short-listed for group discussions and personal interviews, on the basis of their performance in the Common Admission Tests for admission to six elite Indian Institutes of Management; and

(b) if so, whether Government would take this ground reality into consideration while finalizing quota for OBCs for admissions for higher and professional education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Five hundred sixty-one (561) OBC students have been short-listed by six Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Indore and Kozhikode for group discussions and personal interviews, on the basis of their performance in the Common Admission Test for admission to 2008—2010 session.

(b) No, Sir.

Regulation of AICTE

3577. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Knowledge Commission has commented that the model of regulation of the AICTE has led to an exploitative and commercial environment with a compromise on quality of education, thereby leading to a mismatch between demand and supply;

(b) if so, whether Government has initiated any remedial measures, in consultation with the Commission; and

(c) whether the long-pending education reforms would be finalized to ensure transparency and accountability in the working of AICTE and similar other bodies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) The National Knowledge Commission, in its report, has commented that "the existing regulatory framework constrains the supply of good institutions, excessively regulates existing institutions in the wrong places, and is not conducive innovation or creativity in higher education. The challenge is therefore to design a regulatory system that increases the supply of good institutions and fosters accountability in those institutions".

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education has already constituted a Review Committee to review the role and fuctions of University Grants Commission and All India Council for Technical Education as part of the reform process of higher education in the country.